

FEB 583

INFORMATION REPORT CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY Venezuela

SUBJECT Political Affiliation of Venezuelan Army Units

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

1. Because of the Venezuelan government policy of rotation of individuals during their Army career, the continuous turnover of personnel under the Conscription Law, and the youthful and usually uneducated qualities of the average conscript, it is impossible to characterize any particular unit of the Army in terms of political ideology. An informed Army officer in the Judge Advocate General's office stated that there has been little or no penetration of the Army by foreign "isms" and that the troops are loyal to the government.
2. The officer corps is generally anti-Communist, nationalist, and friendly to the United States. Although split from time to time by inter-rank rivalries, the corps could normally be expected to consolidate in opposition to any civilian group which might challenge the prestige, power, and economic status that the Army now enjoys. An adequate military intelligence system provides Army leaders with information concerning political troublemakers and such persons are usually assigned to non-sensitive posts.
3. The officer from the Judge Advocate General's office stated that most of the soldiers are "peasants from the interior" among whom there is a predominance of negroes. In the event of unsettled conditions, the soldiers, who are usually completely loyal to their officers, would follow them without regard to the merits of the cause the officers were supporting. Continual supervision of the placement of officers in positions of command and frequent reassignment prevents the officers from developing too large a following and thus lessens the chances of any particular unit becoming a serious threat to the government.
4. [REDACTED] state that it is probable that there are attempts on the part of the Accion Democratica and the Communist Party to propagandize among the soldiers, recruit members, and organize cells. However, only the more intelligent non-commissioned officers would be susceptible to such organizational work, and present-day Army policies prevent outside groups from gaining a stronghold in any Army unit.
5. Exact and complete figures on the distribution of troops throughout the Army are not available. The following is a list of the Army units, their commanding officers, and, in several instances, the estimated number of troops in the unit in 1948:

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Commanding Officer</u>
Agrupamiento 1	San Cristobal, Tachira	Lt. Col. Roberto Casanova
1st Battalion "Venezuela"	Merida	Lt. Col. Gabriel Briceno
3th Battalion "Miranda"	Trujillo	Maj. Jose Leon Stopinan
12th Battalion "Carabobo"	San Antonio	Maj. Jose Garcia Moreno
13th Battalion "Boyaca"	Independencia	Maj. Marcos Rangel Barrientos
15th Battalion "Junin"	El Cobre	Lt. Col. Luis Pineda Leon
21st Battalion "Ricaurte"	San Cristobal	Lt. Col. Luis Brea Boyer
Agrupamiento 2	Maracaibo, Zulia	Lt. Col. Nestor Prato
7th Battalion "Paez"	Maracaibo	Lt. Col. Ignacio Marquez
16th Battalion "Pedro Leon Torres"	Maracaibo	Lt. Col. Jesus Maria Castro
800 enlisted men, 48 officers in the command.		
Agrupamiento 3	Barquisimeto, Lara	Lt. Col. Marcelino Rangel Barrientos
5th Battalion "Urdaneta"	Valencia	Lt. Col. Leopoldo Aponte Garcia
20th Battalion "Piar"	Barquisimeto	Maj. Simon Abreu Manzanilla
25th Battalion "Girardot"	Coro	Lt. Col. Berto Antonio Portales
Agrupamiento 4	Maracay, Aragua	Col. Felix Edmundo Martinez
1st Regiment Artillery	Maracay	Maj. Hector D'Lima Polanco
10th Battalion "Salom"	La Victoria	Lt. Col. Enrique Gonzalez Pacheco
220 enlisted men, 14 officers in 10th Battalion.		
Agrupamiento 5	Caracas, F. D.	
1st Cavalry Regiment "Plaza"	Caracas	Lt. Col. Jose L. Betancourt
Engineer Battalion "Francisco Avendano"	Caracas	Maj. Jose Mora Perez
Experimental Corps No. 22	Caracas	Maj. Pedro Molina Herrera
1st Armored Battalion "Bermudez"	Caracas	Maj. Antonio de Rosa
2nd Battalion "Bolivar"	Caracas	Lt. Col. Jose V. Zambrano
8th Battalion "Ribas"	Caracas	Lt. Col. Cesar Rojas Bello
Agrupamiento 6	Maturin, Monagas	Lt. Col. Rafael V. Vivas
4th Battalion "Sucre"	Maturin	
9th Battalion "Marino"	Cumana	Lt. Col. Luis S. Mogollon Sanchez
11th Battalion "Cedeno"	Barcelona	Lt. Col. Carlos Julio Urbina
200 enlisted men, 5 officers.		
Agrupamiento 7	San Juan de Los Morros	Lt. Col. Luis Enrique Maldonado
14th Battalion "Pichincha"	Ciudad Bolivar	Lt. Col. Alfonso Acosta Corócha
17th Battalion "Bravos de Apure"	San Juan de los Morros	Lt. Col. Jose Venancio Silva

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